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RIGHT OF REPLY
BY THE
INDONESIAN DELEGATION
ON ITEM 9

Mr. Chairman

Once again the distinguished representative of Portugal deemed it necessary to make reference to East Timor which his delegation has "dutifully" done in this forum from year to year. We can not allow such practises to go unanswered, even though these allegations and insinuations are not at all new to us.

My Delegation has in the past repeatedly explained that the self-determination of East Timor is a non-issue that has long since lost its relevance. If there are remaining problems in the efforts to find an internationally acceptable solution to the so called question of East Timor, the forum for that purpose is the dialogue between Indonesia and Portugal under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary General which has been ongoing since 1983. To make the undertaking successful, such a two-faced and inconsistent policy should not be practised. We also share the widely-held view in this forum that the dialogue should be supported as the viable mechanism.

Indonesia has played its part in good faith by consistently demonstrating its full cooperation with the Secretary General in exploring ways and means that would enable the latter to achieve the best solution. As proof of this goodwill and in order to facilitate the task of the Secretary General in creating an

atmosphere conducive to a solution, the Indonesian House of Representatives extended an invitation in February 1987 to the Portuguese Parliament to send a delegation to visit East Timor.

Hence, the invitation has been one of the topics discussed in the dialogues. According to the Portuguese media in November 1990, the terms of reference and modalities of the visit were agreed upon in September 1990, and it was also agreed that a United Nations team would visit East Timor along with the Portuguese Parliamentary delegation. However, we haven't heard anything as a follow up.

The distinguished Representative of Portugal has again presented the issue of self-determination of East Timor in an anachronistic way and has failed to concede any responsibility of its own part. The fact that Portugal had left the territory in the midst of a civil war which caused thousands of casualties was not of course mentioned in his statement. An honest portrayal of events, however, recently appeared in the Portuguese newspaper "Diario de Noticias" of 7 January 1991, and I quote "... Timor was criminally abandoned to its fate by the occupying forces of Portugal". It should be recalled that that was on 16 August 1975. In this regard it is also relevant that the "Economist" of the week of 12-18 January 1991 said "Many Portuguese feel partly to blame for the death of 100.000 Timorese". We simply hope that the Portuguese Government will eventually acknowledge its complicity in the tragedy.

A Portuguese journalist, Nuno Rocha, on August 19, 1990 wrote in the Diario de Noticias in which he also referred to the abandonment of east Timor by Portugal leaving behind a raging civil war. Referring to his book "Timor Timur, the 27th Province of Indonesia", he wrote "I can state with certainty what had happened : the civil war continued until December of that year, which meant it lasted for 5 months. During that Indonesia implored Portugal to return to reestablish its authority on the territory. Indonesia had even gone to the extent of proposing an international peace keeping force. For that purpose 3 meetings were held between Indonesia and Portugal in London, Rome and Macau". This civil war had caused no less than 45,000 refugees flow to West Timor.

Portugal's
The statement grossly omitted the ensuing events in the course of which, firstly, the determination of the majority of the people of East Timor - as expressed through the existing political parties - to resist the impositions of the tyranny of the minority which was well armed by Portugal, was shown. Secondly, the majority of people had reached the political maturity to decide by its own freewill about its future. This was clearly reflected in the Balibo Declarations on 30 November 1975, made by the four political parties in which they solemnly pledged to integrate in Indonesia. The Portuguese assessment in terms of the immaturity of the local people to decide on their own about their future is an insult to the East Timorese. And this is a typical colonialist attitude. Along similar lines, in 1942 the Governor General of the Dutch East Indies made a similar

statement that Indonesia needed a hundred years more before Independence.

Against this background, it is a well established fact that East Timor became an integral part of Indonesia in July 1976 following the free and democratic application of the right to self-determination by the people of East Timor in accordance with the provisions enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and resolutions 1514 (XV), 1541 (XV) and 2625 (XXV). In the exercise of their political freedom and inalienable rights, the people of the province reaffirmed their decision to integrate with the Republic of Indonesia by participating in the General Elections of 1982 and 1987.

Perhaps it needs to be added that, the decision of the East Timorese to integrate with the Republic of Indonesia has been recognized by the majority of the countries in the region. In 1982, of the 26 nations in Southeast Asia and the Pacific which are members of the United Nations, 23 refused to support the draft resolution on East Timor submitted to the General Assembly. As is well known, acceptance by the states in the region concerned constitutes an important factor in the process of decolonization.

The representative of Portugal has also made an analogy between East Timor and the situation in the Gulf, which is absurd and misleading. Many distinctions are evident in the two cases. As widely known, the question of East Timor is that of a non-self governing territory in the process of decolonization, a

process which was utterly mishandled by the former colonial power. Therefore to make a simple comparisons is ridiculous. Prior to its present situation, Kuwait was a super welfare state, incomparable to many other independent states since the needs of its citizens were well-taken care of by the Kingdom. No comparison can justifiably be made in the history of the past 400 years during which time the people of East Timor suffered the misery and oppression of the worst type of colonialism. The same article in the above mentioned "Economist" said that "Portugal did little to improve East Timor's quality of life in its 400 years of colonial rule", a statement which come as no surprise to many observers. Similar observation was also contained in the findings of the socio-anthropological research of the University of Gajah Mada, which the Portuguese delegation referred to, but in many ways were taken out of context and distorted.

My delegation does not want ot dwell on the socio-economic progress and the actual situation in the area, as it is open for observation. We understand why Portugal is still wondering about what is happening in East Timor, something which cannot be learned from one or two dispatches. It is for this reason, among others, that Indonesia invited the Portuguese Parliament to visit, in order to see and learn for themselves.

Thank you.